

REMARKS

Applicants filed a Response to the Restriction Requirement on December 19, 2003.

It is requested that the Examiner consider the foregoing amendments to the claims, including the examination of claim 6 in place of claim 1 on the merits.

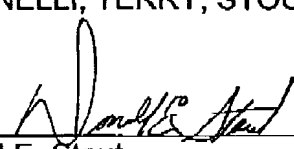
Claim 6 has been amended to improve its form for examination.

Early action on the merits is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (612.41243X00) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: January 8, 2004

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• **Comments:**

I hereby certify that this "Preliminary Amendment" (5 pages), is being facsimiled to the Patent and Trademark Office (Fax No. 703 872-9310 on January 8, 2003).



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